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**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims**

1-19. (canceled)

20. (currently amended) A method of passively aligning optical elements comprising:  
aligning and securing one or more optical elements to bases using one or more first flexible gripping elements on the bases; and  
securing and passively aligning one or more of the bases to a substrate using one or more second flexible gripping elements on the substrate.

21. (cancelled)

22. (currently amended) The method of claim 20, wherein ~~each optical element is secured to the respective base by a~~ the first flexible gripping element having ~~has~~ a pair of spaced sidewalls defining a channel for receiving the optical element.

23. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[21]]~~ 20, wherein the ~~receiving structure includes a second~~ flexible gripping element having ~~has~~ a pair of spaced sidewalls defining a channel for receiving the base.

24. (currently amended) The method of claim 23, wherein each base is sized and shaped to cooperate with the receiving second flexible gripping element to secure the base to the substrate.

25. (currently amended) The method of claim 23 wherein the bases are sized and shaped such that they are interchangeable in each of the ~~receiving structures~~ second flexible gripping elements.

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26. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[21]]~~ 20, wherein ~~the receiving structure includes securing and passively aligning one or more of the bases comprises disposing at least a portion of the base in a depression in the substrate that receives at least a portion of the base in position on the substrate.~~

27. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~[[21]]~~ 20, wherein the ~~receiving structures~~ first and second flexible gripping elements and bases have predetermined and standardized sizes and features.

28. (currently amended) An apparatus for passively aligning optical elements, comprising:  
one or more bases, each base having a first ~~receiving structure~~ flexible gripping element configured to secure an optical element to the base; and  
a substrate having one or more second ~~receiving structures~~ flexible gripping elements at predetermined locations, each second ~~receiving structure~~ flexible gripping element configured to secure and passively align one of the bases to the substrate.

29. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the first ~~receiving structure~~ flexible gripping element secures the optical element to the base at a predetermined spatial and angular position.

30. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the first ~~receiving structure~~ flexible gripping element aligns the optical element to the base.

31. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 30, wherein the first ~~receiving structure~~ flexible gripping element ~~comprises a~~ having has a pair of sidewall defining a channel for receiving the optical element and securing the optical element to the base.

32. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the second ~~receiving structure~~ flexible gripping element ~~includes a~~ having has a pair of sidewalls defining a channel for receiving the base and securing the base to the substrate.

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33. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 32, wherein the sidewalls include upper and lower portions and spacing between the upper portions is less than spacing between the lower portions.

34. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the base further includes an alignment feature which cooperates with an alignment feature on the second ~~receiving structure~~ flexible gripping element, thereby securing the base to the substrate.

35. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~[[33]]~~ 34, wherein the alignment feature includes a groove.

36. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the second ~~receiving structure~~ flexible gripping element includes a recess located in a surface of the substrate for receiving at least a portion of the base.

37. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the bases are sized and shaped such that the bases are interchangeable in each of the second ~~receiving structures~~ flexible gripping elements.

38. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the ~~receiving structures~~ flexible gripping elements and bases have predetermined and standardized sizes and features.

39. (currently amended) An optical device, comprising:

a plurality of optical elements;

a plurality of bases having first ~~receiving structures~~ flexible gripping elements configured to secure the optical elements to the base; and

a substrate having a plurality of second ~~receiving structures~~ flexible gripping elements at predetermined locations, the second ~~receiving structures~~ flexible gripping elements configured to secure and passively align the bases to the substrate.

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40. (currently amended) The apparatus of claim ~~[[38]]~~ 39, wherein the optical elements are selected from a group consisting of optical fibers, lensed fibers, prisms, filters, thin film filters, switching elements, lenses, graded index lenses, gratings, mirrors, MEMs mirrors, electroholographic switches, VCSEL arrays, variable optical attenuation elements, tunable filters and LCD switches.